

# **Review Process for Placement Levels of Care for Children and Youth in the State of Connecticut**

The following list outlines the various treatment settings outside of home-based care that a child may be assessed for and the review and approval process that accompanies such a request.

- 1. The DCF Commissioner does not participate in the authorization of the following placements unless it is an out-of-state placement for a DCF involved youth:**

## **ACUTE INPATIENT PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALIZATION - Child/Adolescent**

Inpatient treatment services in a licensed general or psychiatric hospital offering a full range of diagnostic, educational, and therapeutic services including arranging for and/or providing psychological testing when medically necessary with capability for emergency implementation of life-saving medical and psychiatric interventions. Services are provided in a physically secured setting. Child/Adolescent admission into this level of care is the result of a serious or dangerous condition that requires rapid stabilization of psychiatric symptoms. This service is generally used when 24-hour medical and nursing supervision are required to provide intensive evaluation, medication titration, symptom stabilization, and intensive brief treatment.

## **Albert J. Solnit Center: INPATIENT PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALIZATION**

The services provided at the Solnit Center – South Campus represent the most restrictive inpatient psychiatric hospital level of care within the CT service continuum and are focused on stabilization over a more prolonged period of time or providing specialized treatment services that cannot be provided at acute levels of inpatient care. Treatment is designed to improve functioning such that discharge to a less restrictive setting is both feasible and expected to result in a sustained benefit. The hospital provides comprehensive care to children and adolescents with severe mental illness and related behavioral and emotional problems who cannot be safely assessed or treated in a less restrictive setting.

## **PSYCHIATRIC RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT FACILITY**

A Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF) is a community-based inpatient facility that provides psychiatric and other therapeutic and clinically informed services to individuals under age 21, whose immediate treatment needs require a structured 24-hour inpatient residential setting that provides all required services (including schooling) on-site while simultaneously preparing the child/adolescent and family for ongoing treatment in the community. The level of care is less intensive than acute inpatient hospitalization and more restrictive than residential treatment or home and community-based treatment, including partial hospitalization and home-based services.

- 2. The DCF Commissioner's approval is not required for the *initiation of a referral to ValueOptions* to the following treatment setting. After ValueOptions reviews the child's clinical materials to ensure that the referral conforms to the Level of Care guidelines and that the youth's needs comport with the treatment service type being requested (Medical necessity), the recommended referral is brought to the Commissioner for approval before placement. In the rare case when ValueOptions does not approve the level of care being sought, the placement process proceeds with the Commissioner's approval, but any subsequent treatment is not covered by Medicaid. Prior to the referral to ValueOptions, review and approval by the DCF Area Office Director and Regional Administrator is required.**

## **RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTER**

A Residential Treatment Center (RTC) is a 24-hour facility that offers integrated therapeutic services, educational services and activities of daily living within the parameters of a clinically informed milieu and based on a well-defined, individually tailored treatment plan. This level of care is reserved for those children/adolescents whose psychiatric and behavioral health status warrants the structure and supervision afforded by a self-contained setting that has the ability to offer all necessary services, including an on-site educational program, and provide line of sight supervision *when necessary*. RTC level of care may serve as the treatment of choice when a child's behavioral health status places the child or the community at risk should services be offered in a less restrictive setting.

**\*Note:** Private payers and LEAs can send youth to RTCs without any DCF involvement. The Commissioner does not approve these placements.

3. The DCF Commissioner must approve the initiation of a referral to the following treatment settings. After such approval, ValueOptions reviews the child's clinical materials to ensure that the referral conforms to the Level of Care guidelines and that the youth's needs comport with the treatment service type being requested (Medical necessity). In the rare case when ValueOptions does not approve the level of care being sought, the placement process proceeds, but any subsequent treatment is not covered by Medicaid. Prior to the Commissioner's approval, these referrals require the review and approval of the DCF Area Office Director and Regional Administrator. Only youth involved with DCF can access these placements.

**THERAPEUTIC GROUP HOME: LEVEL 2**

A Level II Therapeutic Group Home (TGH) is a small, four to six bed, DCF or DDS licensed program located in a neighborhood setting with intensive staffing levels and services offered within the context of a 24/7 milieu. It is a highly structured treatment program that creates a physically, emotionally and psychologically safe environment for children and adolescents with complex behavioral health needs who need additional support and clinical intervention to succeed in either a family environment or in an independent living situation.

**GROUP HOME: PASS (EDUCATIONAL MODEL): LEVEL 1.5**

A PASS Group Home is a moderately sized, approximately six to ten bed, educational program located in a neighborhood setting that is staffed with non-clinical paraprofessionals who provide specialized child care services offered within the context of a 24/7 setting. It is a structured service program that creates a physically, emotionally and psychologically safe environment for adolescents (ages 14-21) with mild to moderate behavioral health needs who are either too young or lack the skills necessary to move into a transitional living program or independent living situation. The focus of these group homes is to maximize individual outcomes to enable youth to begin to transition toward self-sufficiency. These group homes stress education, pre-employment skill development and independent living skills. Youth attend school in the community. Clinical services (e.g. therapy, medication management), if needed, are accessed through community providers.

**GROUP HOME: Transitional Living Apartment Program (TLAP)/Supportive Work, Education and Transition Program (SWETP)/Maternity: LEVEL 1**

A Level 1 Group Home is a moderately sized, approximately six to twelve bed, program located in a neighborhood setting that is staffed with non-clinical paraprofessionals who provide specialized child care services offered within the context of a 24/7 milieu. It is a structured service program that creates a physically, emotionally and psychologically safe environment for adolescents (ages 12-18) with mild to moderate behavioral health needs who are either too young or lack the skills necessary to move into a transitional living program or independent living situation. The focus of the home is to support the development of independent living skills and positive adolescent behavior. Clinical services (e.g., therapy, medication management), if needed, are accessed through community providers.

4. The DCF Commissioner must approve the referral to the following settings, and ValueOptions does not play a role in admissions. Prior to the Commissioner's approval, these referrals require the review and approval of the DCF Area Office Director and Regional Administrator. Only youth involved with DCF can access these placements

**SHORT TERM RESPITE AND ASSESSMENT (STAR)**

A Short Term Assessment and Respite Home (STAR) is a temporary congregate care service that provides short-term care, assessment and a range of clinical and nursing services to children removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect or other high-risk circumstances. The youth receive assessment services, educational support, significant levels of structure and support, and care coordination related to family reunification, foster care, congregate care, or other discharge planning as appropriate.

**SAFE HOME**

The Safe Home model is a temporary congregate care service that provides immediate, 24-hour care for children ages 6-13 who, due to abuse, neglect, or other high-risk circumstances, are in the care and custody of DCF and the department has determined that they cannot currently be cared for in a family setting. Many of these children have experienced multiple disruptions or a particularly traumatic removal from their family and have significant mental health and/or medical and high-risk behavior management needs. This service provides a range of interventions in order to engage, stabilize and assess each child, improve pro-social functioning, generate a level of care recommendation, plan for and actively and smoothly transition the child into an appropriate placement.